
Addressing Standards

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District of Columbia
Master Addressing Implementation Plan
Standards for Addresses



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1 Data Format

1.1 Application

These addressing and data format standards are to be applied to addresses that are attached to a physical location (whether land parcel, lot, building, or occupancy within a building) within the corporate limits of Washington, DC. They are not intended for use with mailing addresses, including post office boxes and addresses outside of the corporate limits. The data format standards should be applied to mailing list addresses, but it is not the purpose of this document to provide standards for non-situs addresses or addresses outside of Washington, which are commonly contained in mailing lists.

1.2 Street Ownership

The Master Street Name Table shall include a field that identifies the ownership and maintenance responsibility for the streets. This includes public (DC Government responsibility), private (adjacent owners responsibility), federal (U.S. Government responsibility), military (Department of Defense responsibility), and other (responsibility to be specified).

1.3 Street Status

The status of a street shall be incorporated into the Master Address Database Street Name Table. This shall include designation as active, proposed, paper, or abandoned. No addresses may be created on streets that are not active.

1.4 Street Numbers

Street numbers are both numeric (primarily) and alphabetical characters. The fraction "½" must also be incorporated. A 6-character field is specified.

1.5 Spelling and Abbreviation of Names

All street names should be spelled out in full in the Master Street Name list. Common aliases for street names, including common abbreviations (e.g., "MLK Ave." for "Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue") are found in the street name alias table.



1.6 Abbreviations for Street Types

Street types should be spelled out in full in the Master Street Name Table in the Master Address Database. A table of abbreviations such as the U.S. Postal Service standard list should be incorporated into the database to permit the use of abbreviations in external applications that may require it. Additional tables of street type abbreviations can be constructed using other standards (such as those for the Computer Aided Dispatching (E-911), NFIRS, CJIS and other reporting systems) as required.

1.7 Use of Prefix Directionals

Prefix directional designations (such as North, South, East, West, Northeast, Northwest, Southeast and Southwest) shall not be used. Where these exist at present, they shall be considered as part of the name of the street. No new prefix directional designations shall be created in assigning new street names.

1.8 Use of Suffix Directionals

All addresses in Washington DC have a quadrant attached to them (with the possible exception of the Capitol which is at the central point of the addressing grid. These quadrant designations are critical to location of addresses in Washington DC, and must be incorporated into every address. The quadrants are Northeast (NE), Northwest (NW), Southeast (SE) and Southwest (SW). Suffix directionals shall be abbreviated as shown above. There are no suffix directionals that consist of a single cardinal direction (e.g. North).

1.9 Handling of Fractions

Fractions used in street numbers shall be eliminated where possible. No new fractional addresses shall be created. If the two (or many) units are co-equal in a building, each shall have a separate address assignment. If one unit is subsidiary to another (such as a basement or garage apartment), then the subsidiary unit shall be given a unit designation and unit number, such as "Unit 2". Where possible, fractions shall be replaced with unit numbers that are standard alphanumeric characters.



1.10 Punctuation

No punctuation shall be used with the exception of the apostrophe, as found in "L'Enfant".

1.11 Case

Data shall be recorded and stored in upper and lower case, with the first letter of each word in the street name capitalized, and the remaining letters in lower case.

1.12 Parsing of Addresses

Addresses shall be parsed into the following component parts:

- street number
- fraction number
- street name
- street type
- suffix directionals
- unit type
- unit number
- city
- state
- zip
- zip4

It shall be the goal of the addressing program to assist departments that wish to use the Master Address database in parsing their data to meet this standard.

1.13 Metadata

All address records should include metadata that indicates the source of the information for the address, the period of validity (when was this address created, is it still valid, or has it become obsolete?), date and source of update information, etc. The metadata information is detailed in the data model and data dictionary.

2 Address Assignment

Address assignment is normally carried out when a lot is created through a subdivision process, or when a new building is built on vacant land.



Redevelopment of existing properties with some addresses often results in the creation of additional needed addresses.

It is critical that new and altered addresses be entered into the Master Address Database as soon as they are created. Where a new addresses replaces an old one, the old address should be identified, and marked as obsolete, and the old address identification number linked to the new address.

2.1 Street Name Duplication

When new street names are created, no street name shall be duplicated nor nearly duplicated. Street names shall not sound similar to other names when spoken, or have short forms that may cause them to be mistaken for a different street. Existing cases of street names where confusion may occur should be studied to determine if one of the streets could be renamed. Streets that are discontinuous should maintain the same name if possible, provided that the physical distance between the disconnected segments is close enough that there is a perception that the segments are in fact parts of the same street.

2.2 Address Ranges

The Master Address Database contains address ranges for every segment of every street found in the District. When assigning new addresses, the number selected shall fall within the address range for the street segment on which the property or structure is located. The specific address number shall be determined using the address grid, as described in Section 2.3 below.

2.3 Address Grid and Distance between addresses

Washington, DC has an address grid that provides for spacing between addresses of 20 feet. However, there are some areas where older grids provided for incrementing of addresses at 11 and 15 foot intervals. These are grandfathered in, and should be noted within the GIS.

2.4 Starting Point

All addresses emanate from the Capitol Building. This is the center point for the quadrants (NW, SW, NE and SE) also. The Capitol Building is the only building that does not have a quadrant in its address.



2.5 Even and Odd Addresses

Even address numbers are assigned on the left side of the street as the numbers ascend. Odd numbers are assigned on the right side of the street as the numbers ascend.

2.6 Alleys

Alleys that are used as access to structures or connect two streets should be named.

No new numbers shall be assigned to units that front on alleys that do not have an official name. Alleys that have assigned names in the Master Street Name Table shall be treated as if they were standard streets for addressing purposes. If a structure extends from a street to a named alley, the structure's primary address must be that of the street and not the alley.

2.7 Address Model and Linkages

The addressing model provides for addressing at three different levels: the land parcel, the structure, and the individual occupancy within a structure. In some cases, such as a single family residence, all three of these levels would be represented by the same address. However, in a situation with a land parcel containing several apartment buildings, each with a number of units, there would be a single land parcel address, an address for each building, and individual unit addresses for each unit within each of the buildings.

The addresses for the structures on each property parcel are linked in the database, through the use of the *address identification number (aid)*. The addresses for each unit are linked to both the structure in which they are located and the land parcel aid. This allows the location of individual addresses to be tied to specific buildings and land parcels.

2.8 Location of Primary Address

2.8.1 Residential

The primary address for a residential structure shall be determined by the location of the front door or main entrance to the building.

2.8.2 Non-residential



The primary address for non-residential buildings shall be the main entrance to the building or structure. If there are multiple entrances, and they do not provide access to the entire structure, but only to a clearly enclosed portion thereof, then individual street addresses should be assigned to each such entrance.

2.8.3 Number of addresses per structure

The number of addresses per structure should be the minimum necessary in keeping with clearly identifying each individual occupancy.

2.9 Secondary Addresses

Secondary addresses are addresses that refer to a portion of a building or premise. Secondary addresses are always linked to the building's primary address, as well as to the parcel address. In order to designate a secondary street address, the occupancy must have a separate entrance from the exterior of the building.

2.9.1 Residential

Secondary residential addresses may be individual addresses, or apartment or unit numbers. These reference portions of buildings. In the case of a garage or basement apartment, the main dwelling shall be given a primary address without a unit number, while the apartment shall be given a unit number appended to the primary address. A separate address shall not be issued unless there is a separate exterior entrance to the building for the occupancy. In an apartment building, where there is a single entrance, and individual units have entrances from hallways or corridors, unit numbers shall be assigned to the individual units in conformance to the unit numbering standards in Section 2.9.4 of this document.

2.9.2 Non-residential

For non-residential occupancies, secondary addresses are mainly floor, suite, office or unit numbers. These are attached to the primary address of the building. Where a building is divided into separate occupancies, each with a separate entrance from the street, and where there is no internal connection between occupancies in a building, separate street addresses may be granted to each occupancy. Unit addresses should be assigned in conformance with the unit numbering standards in Section 2.9.4 below.



2.9.3 Primary/secondary addresses vs. co-equal addresses

In cases where there are two or more addresses that are equal, and each has a separate exterior street entrance, such as in a duplex or triplex residential structure or a multi-tenant commercial building, each unit shall have its own address, where possible. If there are not sufficient numbers available with the the address range for the street segment, then a single address may be assigned with appropriate unit numbers appended for each dwelling unit or commercial occupancy. In the case of a two or three unit residential structure with one street entrance (such as a duplex where the two units occupy separate floors of a structure, the Address Administrator shall determine whether to assign individual addresses or unit numbers to the individual units. This determination shall be based upon the numbers available within the block range where the building is located.

2.9.4 Occupancy addresses (suites, units, apartments, retail stores in malls, etc.)

Occupancy addresses shall be assigned to each clearly identifiable occupancy. These shall include a unit type and unit number. The unit number may be either a number or an alphabetic character or a combination of the two. The word "rear" or "garage", and the fraction " $\frac{1}{2}$ " exist in some cases as a unit designation; however, the use of these designators shall not be permitted in assigning new unit numbers. In assigning new unit numbers, numeric designations should be used where possible.

In multi-story buildings, each occupancy shall be assigned a number where the first one or two digits indicate the floor on which the occupancy is located. The remaining two or three digits should indicate the number of the actual occupancy. Each floor should be numbered consistently, with even and odd numbers on opposite sides of hallways and corridors. While it is recognized that many buildings are not numbered in conformance with this standard, it is the goal of the DC Government to promote and enforce this standard for new construction, and for substantial remodeling of existing office and commercial structures.

In buildings with multiple street frontages containing multiple uses, the following conditions apply.

1. The building shall have a primary address for the main entrance providing access to the interior of the building, elevators, and offices or residential units on upper floors.



2. If there are other entrances to the main building lobby on other streets, these other entrances may be given separate addresses, if in the judgment of the Address Administrator, such separate addresses are necessary or helpful in identifying large buildings. One of the addresses shall be identified as the primary address for each building. . Secondary entrances can be identified as alternate addresses for emergency services access only.

3. Where there are separate retail or office tenancies on the ground floor of such buildings with individual store-front accesses, each of these retail or office occupancies shall be given an individual address. This individual address shall be linked to the building's primary address. The individual addresses shall also be linked to the square, square suffix and lot number (SSL) so that all addresses are connected from land (property) to structure (building) to occupancy (unit).

3 Non Standard Conditions

3.1 Vacant land

All vacant parcels shall be addressed using the center point of the property's frontage on a public street as the address location point.

Where a property has two or more frontages, the address shall be based on the center point of the frontage on the street with the highest roadway classification (arterial, collector, local, private). If the fronting streets are of equal classification, then the longest frontage shall be the basis for address assignment.

3.2 Multiple buildings on one land parcel

Where multiple buildings exist on a single parcel of land, each building shall have its own address.

3.3 One building on multiple land parcels

Where one building is located on multiple parcels of records, the address of the largest land parcel or the one on which the majority of the building is located should be used. Attempts should be made to merge the land parcels to avoid confusion.



3.4 Curved and Angled Streets

Streets that are curved and angled shall be addressed as follows:

Streets that are at a 30-degree angle to the grid shall be addressed as east/west streets.

Streets that are at a 60-degree angle to the grid shall be addressed as north/south streets.

Streets at a 45-degree angle shall be determined by the Address Administrator, with assistance from the Addressing Task Force, and shall be based upon historical precedent.

Curved streets shall be addressed by the direction of the longest portion of the street, or according to existing addressing.

Circles shall be addressed starting at the southernmost intersection, in a clockwise order.

3.5 Alleys

Alleys with names shall be addressed as streets. Alleys without names shall not have addresses assigned to them.

3.6 Freeways, Ramps, Bridges, and Tunnels

While freeways, ramps, bridges and tunnels are generally not addressed in the conventional sense, as there are not usually any structures that are accessed directly from them, it is important that they are identified in the database by their names, and that where they are lengthy, segments be identified and given dummy ranges to improve emergency and service/maintenance access and record-keeping. They should be given addresses and ranges that are within the grid for standard addresses.

3.7 Parks and Monuments

Parks and monuments must be carefully addressed in Washington due to the large number of them, and the high volume of tourists who visit the city each year. The address should be based upon the closest street frontages that can provide access. Access roads, even though normally closed to traffic, should be named, and given addresses for purposes of emergency services and maintenance. The park or monument name is maintained in the Alias table, with



the standard assigned address in the Master Address Table.

3.8 Water Bodies and Boats

Along the Potomac and Anacostia, there are marinas, docks, launching ramps, and other facilities. Some of the facilities are in Virginia and Maryland, although the water area is with the District of Columbia. Each marina or dock facility shall be given a standard address. If the facility's land area is outside of DC, then the address assigned by the jurisdiction shall be used. The marina name shall be maintained in the Alias Table, with the appropriate address maintained in the Master Address Table.

3.9 Property without Street Frontage

New lots without frontage cannot be created. Existing vacant lots without street frontage shall be addressed based upon their point of ingress/egress (easement or other access rights). Existing lots that are developed but do not have street frontage should be reviewed to determine whether their addresses match their point of ingress/egress to a public street, or whether their addresses may be such that confusion as to their location may exist for emergency and non-emergency service personnel.

4 Aliases

4.1 Street Names

4.1.1 Streets with Multiple Names

Where multiple names are utilized for a single roadway or segment of a roadway, the primary name shall be determined by the Address Committee, and the alternative names shall be placed in the Alias Table. This includes such designations as Federal Route and Interstate numbers, or honorary names that have been assigned either temporarily or permanently.

4.1.2 Obsolete or Previous Names

Where a street has been renamed, the previous name, or obsolete name shall be placed in the Alias Table, and linked to the current name. The obsolete name shall be identified as such in the Alias Table.



4.2 Parks and Monuments

The common name of a park or monument shall be stored in the Alias Table, and linked to the standard address (see above) through the address identification number (*aid*)

4.3 Building Names

Building names (such as "Senate Office Building" or "Cathedral Apartments" shall be stored in the Alias Table and linked to the standard address through the address identification number (*aid*).

4.4 Public Facilities

Public facilities and places of assembly, such as churches, police and fire stations, hospitals, schools, embassies, metro, rail and bus stations, and major government office buildings should be included in the alias place names list.

4.5 Common Place Names

Common place names, such as "McDonalds" or "The White House" shall be stored in the Alias Table, and linked to the standard address through the address identification number (*aid*).

4.6 Vanity Addresses

Vanity addresses shall be discouraged where possible. If a vanity address exists, it shall be stored in the Alias Table and linked to the standard address through the address identification number (*aid*).